

SENATE BILL REPORT

ESHCR 4408

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Higher Education, February 27, 2008
Ways & Means, March 10, 2008

Brief Description: Requesting approval of the statewide strategic master plan for higher education.

Sponsors: House Committee on Higher Education (originally sponsored by Representatives Wallace, Haigh and Sells).

Brief History: Passed House: 2/13/08, 97-0.

Committee Activity: Higher Education: 2/20/08, 2/27/08 [DPA].

Ways & Means: 3/10/08 [DPA].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass as amended.

Signed by Senators Shin, Chair; Kilmer, Vice Chair; Delvin, Ranking Minority Member; Berkey, Schoesler and Sheldon.

Staff: Aldo Melchiori (786-7439)

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

Majority Report: Do pass as amended.

Signed by Senators Prentice, Chair; Fraser, Vice Chair, Capital Budget Chair; Zarelli, Ranking Minority Member; Brandland, Carrell, Hatfield, Hewitt, Honeyford, Keiser, Kohl-Welles, Oemig, Parlette, Rasmussen, Regala, Roach, Rockefeller, Schoesler and Tom.

Staff: Tim Yowell (786-7435)

Background: Every four years, the Higher Education Coordinating Board (HECB) is required to submit an update of the ten-year statewide strategic master plan for higher education (plan) to the Governor and the Legislature. The plan presents the vision, goals, priorities, and strategies in a way that provides guidance for institutions, the Governor, and the Legislature to make further decisions regarding institution-level plans, policies, legislation, and operating and capital funding for higher education. In the plan, the HECB is required to recommend specific actions to be taken and identify measurable performance indicators and benchmarks for gauging progress toward achieving the goals and priorities. The updated plan reflects the expectations and policy directions of the legislative higher education and fiscal

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committees, and provides a timely and relevant framework for the development of future budgets and policy proposals.

The Legislature, by concurrent resolution, approves or recommends changes to the updated plan following public hearings. The HECB then submits the final plan, incorporating legislative changes, to the Governor and the Legislature by June of the year in which the Legislature approves the concurrent resolution. The plan then becomes state higher education policy unless legislation is enacted to alter the policies in the plan.

Summary of Bill (Recommended Amendments): The House of Representatives and the Senate approve the statewide strategic master plan, subject to inclusion of the following legislative recommendations in the final plan: (1) refining and prioritizing the proposed bachelor's and graduate degree goals to tie them more specifically to the state's economic needs; (2) providing programs, degrees, and certificates that use industry best practices and an outcome-based approach; (3) maximizing the use of full-time faculty while maintaining flexibility; (4) creating and maintaining sustainable, efficient, and cost effective facilities, technologies and programs; (5) Maximizing the use of state funding and reviewing the cost of service delivery; and (6) the program capacity at public, independent, and career schools when determining public investments.

The HECB must work with relevant stakeholders to collaboratively refine the strategies and next steps required for implementation of the plan. By February 1, 2009, the HECB submits a report to the higher education committees on progress implementing the plan.

EFFECT OF CHANGES MADE BY WAYS & MEANS COMMITTEE (Recommended Amendments): The HECB should base the bachelor's and graduate degree goals on a specific assessment of Washington's economic needs, rather than external benchmarks. The final plan is to incorporate the recommended legislative changes.

EFFECT OF CHANGES MADE BY HIGHER EDUCATION COMMITTEE (Recommended Amendments): The 15 statements of legislative policy intent are eliminated. When formulating the final plan, the HECB considers: (1) providing programs, degrees, and certificates that use industry best practices and an outcome-based approach; (2) maximizing the use of full-time faculty while maintaining flexibility; (3) creating and maintaining sustainable, efficient, and cost effective facilities, technologies and programs; (4) Maximizing the use of state funding and reviewing the cost of service delivery; and (5) the program capacity at public, independent, and career schools when determining public investments.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony on Engrossed Substitute Bill (Higher Education):
PRO: The HECB has done an impressive job of creating the strategic master plan. The legislative policies added to the resolution provide additional legislative guidance to the HECB and the higher education community. It is important for the HECB to hear from the Legislature so the higher education system can be kept on the right track. Detailed plans

implementing the master plan are already being worked on and will be available in the fall. There are many provisions that are particularly appreciated by students. The ultimate goal is to raise the level of educational attainment in Washington.

OTHER: American Indian communities need to be heard. Only one tribal college is listed in the master plan, but there are others.

Persons Testifying (Higher Education): PRO: Representative Wallace, prime sponsor; Ann Daley, HECB; Bryce McKibben, Washington Student Lobby; Madeline Thompson, Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board; Terry Teale, Council of Presidents; Jan Yoshiwara, State Board for Community and Technical Colleges.

OTHER: Don Woodcock, citizen.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony on HIE Recommended Amendments (Ways & Means): PRO: The plan focuses on three things: increased degree production; promoting research and economic development; and revising public financing mechanisms to focus on outcomes and performance. The HECB will work with the independent colleges and universities to encourage them to increase their degree production. The HECB will also work with the colleges and universities to improve productivity through strategies such as enabling more high school students to earn college credits while in high school, and improved coordination among the various colleges and universities so that more courses transfer. The HECB will investigate alternatives such as expanded distance- and workplace-based learning in order to reduce the potential capital budget costs. Students support the plan, as do all sectors of the higher education system, because they would be actively involved in its further development and implementation.

Persons Testifying (Ways & Means): PRO: Ann Daley, Higher Education Coordinating Board; Matt Kreiling, Washington Student Lobby.